Building Resilience, Reducing Stress

Healthy for the Holidays
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Good Morning!
Objectives

• Increase awareness of how our bodies react to stressful situations
• Learn about ways to improve coping and reduce stress
• Get a chance to practice stress reduction techniques
  – Mindfulness & Self-Compassion
References:


Stress: What’s the big deal?

• What is “stress”?
  – A state of mental tension and worry
  – Something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety
  – A physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation

Merriam-Webster
When we are stressed...

- Pupils dilate
- Respiration increases
- Heart rate increases
- Blood pressure increases
- Blood flows away from organs
- Sweat glands stimulated
- Sugar and fatty acids released into blood
- Adrenal gland releases adrenaline and noradrenaline
Stress just keeps going and going.
Autonomic Nervous System

**Sympathetic**
- Prepares the body for physical activity
- ‘Fight, flight or freeze’ response
- On alert, prepares us to act
- Speeds up the heartbeat, increases blood pressure, suppresses immune system

**Parasympathetic**
- Relaxes the body, inhibits or slows many functions
- ‘Rest and digest’ response
- Prepares us to heal, receptive
- Slows down heartbeat, lowers blood pressure, activates immune system
Stress Reduction

Or, How do I access my parasympathetic nervous system?

Art
Music
Prayer
Yoga
Breathing
Singing
Sleep
Talking it out
Giving back

Exercise
Writing
Gratitude
Meditation
Focus on strengths
Laughter
Comforting touch
Accepting help
And many more...
Mindfulness

• The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.

Merriam-Webster
Mindfulness Exercise
Resilience

• Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.

• Resilience is "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

2015 American Psychological Association
Resilience

• Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have.

• It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

2015 American Psychological Association
Developing Resiliency

- Being able to experience both positive and negative emotions in distressing situations
- Being willing to learn from hardship
- Participating in kindness (giving and receiving)
- Practicing self care (physical and mental)
- Finding humor

Scholl
Techniques that help build resiliency: Tai Chi, Qigong, Yoga, Meditation
The 7 C’s of Resilience

- Competence – focus on strengths
- Confidence – belief in ability (not false praise)
- Connection – sense of security, close ties
- Character – morals and values
- Contribution – opportunities to give back
- Coping – lack of shame, trying strategies
- Control – knowing consequences of choices

American Academy of Pediatrics
And an 8th “C”: Compassion

• “It turns out that self-compassionate people are much less likely to be anxious, depressed, and stressed on a day-to-day basis than those who are self-critical.”

Kristen Neff
Self-Compassion Builds Resilience

• Practice:
  – Self-kindness (not self-indulgence)
  – Recognizing our common humanity (resist isolation)
  – Mindfulness (acknowledging the current moment)
Self-Compassion Practice
Thank you.